



# Chambers's Journal

## SIXTH SERIES.

### CARLYLE AND ROBERT CHAMBERS: UNPUBLISHED LETTERS.



THE letters from Thomas Carlyle to Robert Chambers which form the excuse for this article were recently discovered among other correspondence preserved in the vaults of our publishing office in Edinburgh.

They had previously been lost sight of for nearly sixty years, and were found among numerous other interesting letters chiefly relating to the early history of *Chambers's Journal*. It may be mentioned that other Carlyle correspondence of less interest is to be found among the letters written by distinguished persons to the late Dr Robert Chambers, and now preserved by his descendants. The letters here printed are in relation to the original fund raised for the benefit of Mrs Begg, the surviving sister of Robert Burns. The result, as indicated by these letters, was not particularly successful; but, later on, through the exertions of Lord Houghton, Mr Carlyle, and others, and the special solicitation of Lady Peel, a pension was granted by the Queen to Mrs Begg. This, together with the fund already raised, was sufficient to provide Mrs Begg against any future anxiety as to ways and means.

Mr Robert Burns Begg, of Kinross, in his *Memoir of Isobel Burns* (Mrs Begg), gives an interesting account of the later life of his grand-aunt, who, with her two daughters, had settled at Tranent, near Edinburgh, about the year 1832. In 1843, after the pension had been bestowed, it was arranged that Mrs Begg and her daughters should return to Ayrshire; and the family took up their abode in a picturesque cottage on the banks of the Doon, near the high-road leading to Ayr. Here Mrs Begg spent the last fifteen years of her life in the companionship of her daughters. In her comfortable cottage she received numerous friends belonging to the locality and many visitors from a distance, of widely different grades. Her recollections of the poet were vivid and distinct, and with her sister-in-law, Jean Armour, she had kept up a warm friendship

until Jean's death in 1834. Mrs Begg died in December 1858, in her eighty-eighth year; and in 1859, at the time of the first Burns Centenary Celebration (a more recent celebration in 1896 was the hundredth anniversary of his death), a sum of one thousand pounds was raised for her daughters, Carlyle again taking great interest in this subscription. Messrs W. & R. Chambers had already handed to Mrs Begg the proceeds, amounting to two hundred pounds, of the first impression of Robert Chambers's *Life and Works of Burns* (1851-52).

Carlyle's essay on Burns in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1828 was nominally a review of Lockhart's short but excellent *Life of Burns*, published the same year. The fact that this biography was by the son-in-law of the great Sir Walter Scott, who was also editor of the *Quarterly Review*, helped to make Burns known to thousands who till then had barely heard his name; and Carlyle's review contributed greatly to the same result. It was, indeed, the most important piece of Burns criticism that had yet appeared. Its kindly sympathy, generous judgment, and profound insight contrast quite singularly with the essay on Burns published in the same *Review* by Lord Jeffrey, then and still in 1828 its editor. If after reading Jeffrey's well-meant but superficial paper we pass to Carlyle's, we are compelled at a glance to see how far the nineteenth century had even then travelled from the shallow critical canons of its earlier years. Carlyle's Burns essay seems to have been among the first-fruits of the six years spent in literary labour and seclusion in the solitude of Craigenputtock. Characteristic though it is, yet in the matter of style there is a noticeable difference between Carlyle's Burns essay and his other work; and when Mr Sumner remarked on this to Jeffrey, Jeffrey said, 'I will tell you why that is different from his other articles: I altered it.'

The year 1831, which saw Carlyle's migration

from Craigenputtock to London, witnessed also one of his very few appearances as a public speaker. He was actually induced—"not against my deliberate will, but with a very great repugnance," he says—to attend a dinner at Dumfries in honour of the Dumfriesshire poet and littérateur Allan Cunningham, well knowing he would be expected to make a speech. He did make a speech—a memorable speech, for it was another hearty tribute to 'the memory of Robert Burns,' the toast then proposed being drunk in solemn silence.

The first of these letters from Mr Carlyle to Dr Robert Chambers is dated from Templand in Dumfriesshire. Templand belonged to the family of Mrs Welsh, Carlyle's mother-in-law; at Templand Mrs Welsh spent her later years; and there in the end of February 1842 she died. This was the 'mournful event' that had brought Carlyle from his home in Chelsea to Scotland at this time. The phrase 'Worship of Heroes' recalls the fact that the year before he had published in book-form his lectures—delivered in 1840—on 'Heroes and Hero-worship.'

TEMPLAND, THORNHILL, DUMFRIES,  
3 April, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your Samaritan endeavour on behalf of Burns's sister is worthy of all praise. It strikes one as a most tragical fact, this that you announce. How many tavern dinners are eaten yearly in all quarters of the globe, and froth-speeches delivered, in elegiac commemoration of the broken-hearted Robert Burns, with "Ah, the barbarously-entreated Poet; ah, if *we* had him here now!"—and his own sister *is* yet here, and one of those tavern dinner bills would be a benefit to her; and froth-speech is still all that results! "Be ye warmed, be ye fed,"—*our* pockets remain buttoned, only our foolish mouths are open, to eat and to jabber. It is damnable. Such "Worship of Heroes" is like much else that it holds of,—a thing requiring peremptorily to be altered. I for one thank you that you have stirred to act in this matter, instead of dining and talking.

There can be no possible objection to your use of my name in the way proposed; unless it be that a better were easily procurable: Lockhart's, for example, whom I doubt not I could soon persuade, were I back again in London.

You must also take my poor guinea; a kind of widow's mite, which, poor as all authors are, it will be a luxury for me to give. I think also I can gather a few guineas more in my home circle, if you send me a half-dozen of your subscription papers up to town.

A mournful event has brought me down hither, and still detains me here: but in some two weeks more I expect to be at Chelsea again.

With many good wishes, and even good remem-

brances (for your face and voice, as well as books, are known to me from of old), I remain,

Yours most truly,  
T. CARLYLE.

In 1842 the Anti-Corn-Law agitation was in full course; the 'People's Petition' for something like the Charter was rejected; and in summer there were strikes, riots, and commotions in various places. A Chinese war was being carried on; and 1842 recorded the worst disasters of the Afghan war, including that awful retreat from Cabul. It was not till September that Ghuznee and Cabul were retaken. Hence, writing a second letter in July, Carlyle had only too good reason to speak of 'the present awful time.'

CHELSEA, 23 July, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,—As the season here is drawing to a close, Mr Milnes and I thought good to wind up our Begg-Subscription affairs, and transmit you the amount. We have made out the sorriest pittance, as you will see by the particulars on the annexed sheet: but indeed, after the conquest of the pension, we did not think it right, in the present awful time, to press charitable people, or even to apply at all to such as were not decidedly rich. Mr Milnes took the Fashionables in his own hand,—and truly they have not proved too exuberant upon him: I had an agent in the City, of whom I expected something; but when applied to, he responded that some other party or parties had been among his friends for the same object, and in his hand there was nothing. I sent off the amount, thirty-three pounds and sixpence, yesterday afternoon; and it will be paid, when asked for, at the British Linen Company Bank, to "Robt. Chambers, Esq., Athol Place, Edinr.":—and so herewith ends my stewardship in this piece of Benevolence. I am right glad we got the little Pension; otherwise I fear the Subscription would have been rather a lame affair.

Yesterday, on my way homewards, I received another sovereign; and a certain acquaintance of mine in Lincoln's Inn Fields professes to have some three pounds and odd already in his hand, and to be able to gather a few pounds more if he had circulars; for which element of furtherance he long ago applied to me, but got none, my stock being out. If you have any circulars left, pray be so kind as address half a dozen to that worthy man: "John Forster, Esq., 58. Lincoln's Inn Fields": the result of his labours together with this new sovereign of mine, and any other dripping that may fall into my dish, shall thereby in some good way be transmitted to you. Much more money might be gathered if one became pressing: indeed there has been properly no pressure here at all; Peel having once yielded, the matter elsewhere was left very much to take its course.

We are all much pleased with the figure Miss

Begg makes in these transactions: her letters are full of modest sense and propriety; one asks along with you, whether no better task than sewing clothes at Tranent could be discovered for her? You, if you see a possibility, will not fail to lay hold of it for the poor girl. In the meanwhile, I suppose she is *safe* at Tranent, and not unhappy;—rather well off, one may say, as welfare goes in this world. I reckon it one of the best features of this Begg business that your conquest for them is not one that lifts them out of their old state at all; but simply renders soft and light for them a set of conditions they were from the first used to. You have seen Isabella Begg, and can judge her and her circumstances and capabilities: we will leave you to do your wisest and kindest.

And so adieu, my dear Sir; and thanks to you in the name of all good Scotchmen and men: and according to the old Proverb, May ne'er worse be among us!

Yours very sincerely,

T. CARLYLE.

The John Forster who from the above and from the following letter is seen to have taken a hearty interest in the subscription was of course the well-known writer, the biographer of Goldsmith and friend of Dickens.

CHELSEA, 2 Decr., 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,—This Post-office order, for the Begg Subscription, does not represent my own sovereign which you were rigorous enough to send back to me, but the sovereign of a "Wm. Hamilton, Esq., Cheapside," from whom I received that sum after the rest had been despatched to you. I meant to add it to some pittance which I understand Mr Forster (58 Lincoln's Inn Fields) still holds, with the firm purpose of sending it to you: but we do not meet often, Forster and I; and last time we did meet, he was not yet ready: so, to wash my hands of all chance of sacrilege, do you here take the little coin, and add it to the others!

Your last letter expressing some doubt as to the annual pension of £20, I forwarded it to Milnes; from whom there came answer, that at the Treasury things went on very slow, but that of the pension itself there was no doubt whatever. Well;—I wish poor Mrs Begg had the first instalment of it. Should there be any altogether too ominous delay, pray give us notice, and it shall be quickened. Milnes, I believe, is in Constantinople or somewhere far Eastward; but there are other people here.

This is the fourth of the five letters from Carlyle on the subject which have been preserved:

CHELSEA, 12 Decr., 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your news of the Begg Subscription is very good;—and yet not all good:

that is a most mortifying paltriness, that of the illustrious Premier *pausing* over his first bounty as too enormous, and reducing it to half! I myself saw his autograph, announcing that Great Britain would afford Twenty pounds to the indigent representatives of its greatest man in these centuries; and now, it seems, terrified at the rash act, she has ventured only upon Ten. The sons of Gilbert Burns, too, it would appear, have been "eating dirt." Alas, the whole world continually eats quantities of dirt. Yet, praised be Heaven, some Four Hundred pounds for such an end do come out of the world, dirt-eating world as it is; and you, for your share, have been enabled to accomplish your problem, to solace and screen from misery a meritorious, forlorn, every way venerable Scottish heart, to save all Scottish men from a new ugly stigma; and do one other heavenly act under this terrestrial sun. We will complain of nothing; let us rejoice over many things.

Your project for these young women and their mother meets, in every feature of it, my entire approbation. They will do better in Ayrshire every way, since they themselves wish to go thither. The scene is, at any rate, more genial, as I suppose, for representatives of Burns; by removal from Tranent, where they have from poor become "rich," they escape a multitude of mean village envies, and other impediments; they have free scope to begin on new ground a new course of activities. Being, to all appearance, sensible young women, I think there is no danger but they will do well. Their sixty pounds a-year is perhaps after all just about the happiest sum for them. Work is still useful, necessary; but no longer tyrannous treadmill necessity; they are not dangerously lifted into a new sphere of existence, but rendered easy in the old one. We may hope, a blessing will be on that poor good household, and better outlooks on all sides are opening for them.

I have signed the Paper. I return you again many thanks and congratulations; and am always,

My dear Sir,

Very sincerely yours,

T. CARLYLE.

These letters show the essentially kindly and generous temper of a man who, from external eccentricities, has often been harshly misjudged; they show how keenly interested, considerate, and painstaking Carlyle could be in doing a kindness. At that moment he was a hard-pressed literary man, in the thick of his struggle with Dryasdust over the body and soul of Cromwell; and it should be remembered that it was only in these years that Carlyle and his wife had been raised beyond the pressure of straitened and precarious means. The fifth letter of the series is also the last:

CHelsea, 21 Decr., 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,—The more I considered that matter of Mrs Begg's Pension, the more incredible it became to me that Sir Robt. Peel could have done such a thing. My first hypothesis was that I had misunderstood your letter; that by the omission of some "each," or other such word, the meaning might have been defaced and overset in that passage. But no: there is a second sentence in which you say, and count expressly, that the Beggs have *ten* pounds in all from this source. My next conclusion therefore was that some Clerk or Subaltern Official at the Treasury was in error; that if so, Sir Robert ought to be again made acquainted with the matter.

Accordingly I set one of my friends to make inquiry at the Treasury: his answer arrives this morning, that all is right there; that it is not ten pounds to the two Misses Begg, but ten pounds to each of them,—twenty pounds in all, as was originally settled. Here are the particulars as he writes them down.

With great satisfaction I conclude, therefore, that your information was defective; that the business itself is all right. Your own reckoning, with the results of it, you can rectify at your leisure: but if there is anything else to be rectified, if these Treasury people are still in error or defect, pray apprise me instantly. Otherwise, I say, there is no haste.

Yours ever truly,

T. CARLYLE.

The following letter, intimating that a pension had been granted, was written by Mr Monckton Milnes (afterwards Lord Houghton), conspicuous alike in politics, society, and literature; and was, of course, addressed not to Dr Chambers but to Mrs Begg:

26 PALL MALL,  
LONDON,  
June 6th, 1842.

MADAM,—I have the pleasure of informing you that Sir Robert Peel, having been informed that a sister of the great Poet Burns was still living and in straitened circumstances, has recommended her Majesty to apply to your use the sum of 50£ sterling from the Royal bounty, and also that Lady Peel, out of the small fund which lies at her disposal as wife of the Prime Minister, has expressed her desire to settle on you the annual pension of 20£. If you prefer that this pension should be settled on your two daughters in sums of 10£ each per annum, it will be equally agreeable to Lady Peel. I shall be obliged to you to inform me which arrangement you prefer, and in case you prefer the settlement on your daughters, to forward me their names. The pension will begin from the present time, and the sum of 50£ will be forwarded to you immediately.

I may mention that I hold no official connec-

tion with Sir Robert Peel, but that he has kindly commissioned me to forward this intelligence to you, as a general lover of literature and as a person much interested in your case as presented to me by Mr Chambers and Mr Carlyle.

I remain, Madam,

Yrs. very obed.,

RICHD. M. MILNES.

About the same date and in the same connection John Gibson Lockhart wrote to Dr Chambers:

DEAR SIR,—I presume you are the person to draw the money now placed in the hands of Mr Dick, Bookseller, Ayr, for the behoof of the sister of Burns. It amounts, you will see, to £20 — 6d. at present: but I believe there will be more by and bye collected in that neighbourhood and deposited to Mr Dick.

The memorandum which I enclose is in the handwriting of Mrs Alexander of Ballochmyle, near Mauchline. I wished *you* to see it—but pray do not make any public use of it unless after ascertaining that that wd. not be disagreeable to the subscribers. I am not aware whether your efforts have been successful in this affair, but I hope they have. I declined having anything to do with an appeal to the English public *until* there shd. have been time allowed for a fair trial in Scotland: but if the result there shall have been insufficient at the commencement of next winter and you will then state the case to Mr Carlyle or myself, he and I will I am sure be equally ready to exert ourselves in London.

Yours very truly,

J. G. LOCKHART.

Aug. 8th, 1842,  
24 SUSSEX PLACE,  
REGENT'S PARK.

One other unpublished letter may be added—that from Burns's nephew to Dr Robert Chambers, announcing the death of his mother, last survivor of the family circle described in the 'Cotter's Saturday Night':

KINROSS,  
5th December, 1858.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have just heard of the death of my Dear old Mother. She has been complaining only for a few days, and died yesterday morning about 8 o'Clock.

The funeral is fixed to be on Thursday at 1 o'Clock.

At this season of the Year, I can scarcely expect you to undertake such a journey—but if convenient for you, I am sure your presence will give us all a melancholy satisfaction, as no one has done so much to render her old age comfortable.



I am afraid my Sisters cannot offer you a bed as their house is small.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours very gratefully,

ROBERT BURNS BEGG.

The author of the memoir above mentioned is a son of the writer of this letter. Mrs Begg was long survived by her daughters, the last of whom, Isabella Begg, died in 1886.

C. E. S. C.

## OF ROYAL BLOOD.

### A STORY OF THE SECRET SERVICE.

#### CHAPTER XVII.—THE KING'S MESSAGE.



HE picture His Majesty held before my gaze was the counterfeit presentment of the woman I feared, the widow of my dead friend Gordon. It was as though this ghastly shadow of the past was thrust upon me in order to render my position the more desperate; for I saw on her pictured lips that smile of defiance which I had known so well long ago, when she was Judith Kohn.

'You recognise her,' observed the King with satisfaction. 'Tell me who and what she is.'

I hesitated, my eyes fixed upon his. In a moment, however, I succeeded in recovering my self-possession, and said:

'That woman is well known to me. Her name was Judith Kohn before she married a man named Clunes, who was my friend.'

'Where did you know her?'

'I first became acquainted with her in Vienna,' I answered, 'while making certain secret inquiries there.'

'And her name is now Clunes! What is her husband's profession?'

I hesitated. Should I relate the whole circumstances? A second's reflection showed me that such a course would be unwise. Only the Marquess of Macclesfield and myself were aware of the truth, and he had imposed silence upon me.

'Her husband,' I said, 'was engaged in the Treaty Department of our Foreign Office in London.'

'Ah! Clunes—Gordon Clunes,' exclaimed Sir John quickly. 'Of course I know him quite well. He's the head of that department.'

'Yes,' I answered, wondering how this photograph—a copy of which was in my possession—could have fallen into the hands of the King.

'What is the character of this woman?' continued His Majesty. 'You can speak quite frankly to me.'

'She's something of a mystery,' I responded.

'A mystery!' he echoed. 'You appear to look upon her with suspicion?'

'I do,' I said.

'Then tell me the circumstances in which you

first met her. Knowledge of them may assist me.'

'I am afraid, your Majesty,' I answered with politeness, 'I must request you to excuse me replying to that question. As a member of the secret service I am under oath not to divulge the result of any inquiry I make to any agent of a foreign state.'

His Majesty looked at me quickly with a sharp glance, perhaps rendered more acute by his aquiline features; then he replied, with a good-humoured smile:

'Of course, M'sieur Crawford; I perfectly understand. Not for one moment would I wish you to betray any official secret to me; but remember that I am friendly to your Queen and country, and that whatever information in this matter you can give me without betraying any confidence will be of the greatest assistance in my investigations.'

'I think there is no harm in explaining to His Majesty who and what this woman is,' Sir John remarked.

'Unfortunately I am unable,' I answered rather annoyed.

'Why?' inquired the Ambassador.

'Because,' I answered, 'the principal fact connected with her career is a secret known only to myself and the Marquess of Macclesfield, who imposed upon me the strictest silence.'

'The Marquess of Macclesfield!' echoed the King. 'Then he knows her?'

I nodded.

'She is a political agent—eh?'

'I have reason to believe so,' I responded.

'Then, if so, why not, in our mutual interests, tell us some minor facts regarding her?' urged the King, again glancing at the photograph with a puzzled air, and stroking his long beard pensively, a habit of his when deep in thought.

I reflected for a moment; then, in the hope that I might obtain knowledge of how this picture had fallen into his hands, I answered:

'Well, she's a woman who has had, as far as I have been able to gather, a very unusual history. She passes as English, but her slight accentuation of certain words is evidence that she is not. In Paris she was once very well known, passing there as the daughter of a wealthy American lady, and

becoming engaged to be married to Count Venosta of the Italian Embassy. This engagement was, however, suddenly and mysteriously broken off, and then she arrived in Vienna, where I first met her.'

'Was she in society there?' inquired the King eagerly.

'No,' I answered. 'Only in the course of some searching inquiries regarding the betrayal of certain secret negotiations between my Embassy and the Austro-Hungarian Government did I become aware of her existence. She was known then as Judith Kohn, and was the supposed wife of one Oswald Krauss, a captain of artillery.'

'Well, and what afterwards?' the King inquired.

'Krauss was convicted by court-martial of selling plans of three of the frontier fortresses to German agents, and sentenced to imprisonment for life. The woman, however, escaped.'

'And she married your friend?'

'Yes. The next I saw of her was several years afterwards, when, on visiting Gordon Clunes, who had married during my absence in Constantinople, I found that she was his wife.'

'Remarkable!' exclaimed His Majesty reflectively. 'Very remarkable! It would almost appear as though she had some object in marrying an official of his grade. It was scarcely wise on his part.'

'He was entirely ignorant of her previous adventures,' I said. 'She passed herself off as an Englishwoman living in a remote country town, whose education had been gained abroad—here, in Brussels, I believe she said.'

'And he believed her,' observed the King, smiling. 'A man in love will believe anything.'

'But this woman is really a secret agent, you say,' exclaimed Sir John. 'Surely Clunes knows that? If not, no time should be lost in informing him. It is a most dangerous position. Already we have had so many attempts to get at the secrets of our diplomacy that we ought to spare no effort to combat them.'

'Every precaution possible has already been taken,' I answered vaguely. 'Had I not given my promise to the Marquess I should undoubtedly have explained all the circumstances now.'

'And this man Krauss,' the King continued—'was his offence a very serious one?'

'Extremely,' I answered. 'His betrayal of military secrets was proved beyond doubt; but it was further made plain that the woman acted as the agent between her lover and the German Government.'

'Ah!' exclaimed His Majesty, as though a sudden thought had occurred to him. 'Then the woman is known at the German Legation?'

'Undoubtedly,' I answered. 'I have certain knowledge that the German Ambassador at

Vienna supplied her with money and arranged for her escape over the frontier after her lover's arrest.'

'But this, you will notice, is a prison photograph,' the King remarked, turning it in his hand.

'She had previously fallen into the hands of the Vienna police for victimising tradespeople. It was after that that her relations with Krauss commenced.'

'I don't remember hearing anything of the betrayal of the plans,' he said reflectively.

'The matter was kept a profound secret,' I answered. 'Only a few high officials and those composing the court-martial were aware of it.'

Too well I remembered all the curious details of that ingenious conspiracy which not only affected the security of the Austrian Empire, but also that of England. It was because of my efforts in that sensational affair—efforts which cost me so much and added ten years to my age—that the Marquess of Macclesfield reposed confidence in me. Yet it was the woman whose faded photograph was now in the hands of the King who could, if she chose, expose and ruin me. How heartless she was I well knew. I had seen more than one illustration of it, and knew that at the moment of her revenge she would not spare me.

'Then you consider her a dangerous political agent?' the King said.

'Most decidedly,' I answered. 'At this moment I am most anxious to know her whereabouts. Our secret intelligence department in London have kept a keen eye upon her for a considerable time; but of late she has evaded us, and once more disappeared. Have you knowledge where she is?'

'No,' he responded, glancing sharply at me. 'This photograph has come into my possession in a somewhat curious manner, and what you have just told me increases the mystery considerably. Perhaps it will be as well if I command inquiries to be made by our police.'

'If I may presume to suggest to your Majesty,' I said quickly, 'the best course would be to leave the matter entirely in my hands.'

'Why?' he inquired quickly.

'Because police interference in such a matter must only hinder me in my inquiries.'

'But you surely have sufficient on hand just now,' the King said.

'The discovery of Judith Kohn cannot be long delayed,' I answered, recollecting that sooner or later she must come to me of her own accord.

'Then, if you desire it, I will not invoke the aid of the police,' His Majesty said. 'Try and find her, and when she is found tell her that I wish her to call and see me.'

'To see your Majesty!' I gasped in surprise.

'Yes. Surely it is not so strange a thing that I should desire to ask this woman a question.

And recollect, Crawford,' he added with considerable emphasis, 'this matter is a pressing one, and of the highest importance. If she fears arrest, tell her that the police here shall not touch her as long as she obeys my command. At all costs I must see her.'

'Very well, your Majesty, I will endeavour to trace her.'

'It is an entirely private matter,' he added. 'Not a soul must know of my dealings with this woman. But, by the way,' he went on, 'do you think that any of the staff at the German Legation here know her?'

'That's impossible to tell. She is probably known at the German Embassy in Paris, and is certainly well known in Vienna.'

'But you say she is now the wife of one of your colleagues in the Foreign Office in London.'

I nodded. I had not told them that Gordon was dead.

'Then she's probably in London?'

'It is quite impossible to tell; because—well, I added, 'because they have parted.'

'Ah!' cried the King. 'She has possibly found that the profession of secret agent is more lucrative than being wife of a Downing Street official, and has returned to the old game.'

'No,' I replied. 'I don't think that; because, by reason of a certain circumstance within my knowledge, the London police are very anxious to find her.'

'May I not know the circumstance to which you refer?' he asked.

'I regret,' I answered quietly, 'that your Majesty may not know that.'

The King drew a long breath, and again stroked his beard pensively.

'Your profession, of course, needs the most delicate tact, and the greatest astuteness and forethought,' he said. 'A single slip, and exposure and disgrace would of course ensue. Against the machinations of England's enemies one must need a thousand eyes.'

I smiled, and answered:

'If by conveying your Majesty's message to Judith Kohn I can render a service I shall do so willingly.'

'Thank you, Crawford,' the polished monarch answered, with a courtly bow. 'If you do this you will render me a very great service in a purely private matter.'

'I have little doubt that she will soon be found,' I responded. 'I only wish I was as sanguine of discovering into whose hands the missing file of correspondence has fallen. The enigma is bewildering.'

'You do not yet appear to have discovered the existence of any secret agents in Brussels,' His Majesty remarked.

'On the contrary,' I replied, laughing, for I had not been idle, 'four of them are my intimate

friends. Three are German agents, and the fourth is employed by Gerard, the French Minister. They believe me to be a cashier in the Old English Bank. Against none of them, however, rests suspicion of having tampered with our despatch-box.'

'It's a mystery, a problem absolutely beyond solution,' Sir John remarked, with a sigh.

'We can only wait,' observed the King. 'Some day ere long, it is to be hoped, Crawford will succeed in obtaining a clue, and thereby expose the truth. Truly the devices of diplomacy are as ingenious as they are astounding. If we could only recover these letters before their existence became known, then we should succeed in baffling our enemies.'

'Ah! that is too late, your Majesty,' I said. 'Already there are evidences on every side that copies of the letters have reached the Foreign Minister in Paris.'

'Well,' said the King, 'continue to do your utmost, and recollect, too, that I have the greatest anxiety to see this woman whom you call Kohn. I must see her, for I tell you frankly that facts have come to my knowledge which have caused me great uneasiness, and I shall know no rest until I get the truth from that woman's lips.'

'The truth you will, I fear, never obtain from the lips of Judith Kohn,' I observed.

'But money can buy most things,' His Majesty said. 'If she is, as you say, a political agent, she is certainly open to bribery.'

'Undoubtedly,' I answered; then added, in a perhaps rather bitter tone, 'Unscrupulous as she is, she could no doubt be bribed to commit any crime, from telling an untruth to the taking of a life.'

'All I ask is that you should send her here,' His Majesty said in the strange, hard voice of one desperate. 'The rest may be left to me.'

This latest development of the tangled chain of circumstances was most extraordinary. It was amazing that the King should desire to see and question her, of all women. She hated me. Had she not at the well-remembered moment, just before I discovered her husband dead, threatened me with exposure and ruin, while I, confident in the knowledge I held of her past, promised my silence only in return for hers? Yet, although I had been ignorant of it, my power over her had already vanished, for the man who had so foolishly married her had already passed to that world which lies beyond the human ken. She did not fear me now, for was she not a perfectly free agent? Aided by the astute German Ambassador at Vienna, she had escaped the Austrian police, and, there being no extradition for a political offence, was quite safe.

As I sat there in silence while His Majesty discussed the critical situation with the Ambassa-

dor, I reflected how, having regard to all the circumstances, her chief object would undoubtedly be to bring upon me swiftly that vengeance which she had openly avowed. Yet, of my own accord, I had promised to seek her and deliver this command of the King's; to entrap her, and, for aught I knew, still further embitter her against me.

Truly my position was unenviable, and my mind full of gravest thoughts. England's honour was at stake, the days were passing quickly, and I had, alas! discovered nothing—absolutely

nothing. Each hour was bringing us nearer and nearer a terrific and terrible conflict with the Powers. War was in the air. In a few days the black storm-cloud which for the past three years had hovered over Europe must inevitably burst; then lands now fair and smiling would be swept by fire and sword, and thousands, perhaps millions, of lives would be sacrificed before those frightful modern engines of destruction.

Both King and Ambassador were fully aware of the crisis at hand, but were utterly helpless. We could only wait.

## THE WATERWAYS OF VENEZUELA.

### PART II.



HE great tableland runs right west to the junction of the Orinoco with the Cassiquiare. From this point to its origin the course and ways of the river are merely a matter of conjecture and Indian legend.

Several expeditions have attempted to penetrate the mystery of its birth, but none have succeeded, possibly because the wild Guaharibos who inhabit the country do not greatly encourage scientific research, and have, in fact, made exploration an unpleasantly exciting pastime to those who have essayed it in their district. For this tribe is by repute numerous, fierce, and warlike. They use the long blowpipe and a nasty little arrow tipped with *curari* poison; and a brave's favourite dinner is a juicy steak of his fellow-man; consequently the Guaharibo lives not on terms of intimacy with his neighbours, and his society is somewhat sedulously shunned by the Venezuelan in general.

The voyager who came nearest to solving the problem was Don Apolinar Diaz de la Fuente, who sailed from San Fernando de Atibapo with some thirty men on the 3rd December 1759. He drew an elaborate map not only of the country he traversed, but also of the entire river to its supposed sources near the Caura; and this map, embodied in that of Solano, copied by Codacci, and approved by Humboldt, is practically that which is found in every school atlas to-day. Without disparagement to the worthy Don, we may be permitted to doubt its accuracy, as we know the greater part of it was composed from imagination and Indian report, while his survey of the portion actually navigated by him is scarcely likely to have been worked by the most exact of instruments. Next (in writing) to Don Apolinar comes Dr Michelena y Rojas, an adventurous Venezuelan, who did much excellent exploration in the country, and who started for the Upper Orinoco in 1855. But he never got farther than the Cassiquiare, where he also interviewed certain Indians. So many other stories are current regarding the sources of the Orinoco and the

difficulties of reaching them that it is useless to quote them here. The fact is, the different tribes of Indians all talk different dialects and have different names for the rivers and mountains, so that an attempt to piece their various tales into one harmonious whole only leads to wild confusion.

Only this year I had a long conversation on this subject with a Maquiritare chief. His version agreed in its main points with that of Don Apolinar de la Fuente, but he added that close to the sources there was a large black mountain which every year or two threw out fire and smoke. As the general nature of the country is not volcanic, and as no volcano is known to exist in this district, his statement requires verification.

However, leaving aside the whereabouts of the actual sources of the river, we have it proved navigable by steamer as far as the Cassiquiare, and by canoes at least to the Sierra Parima, a distance in all of about fourteen hundred and fifty miles. We may safely say that the length of the Orinoco from the mouth of the Macareo to the Cassiquiare is thirteen hundred miles, and from there to the base of the Sierra Parima another one hundred and sixty miles—in all fourteen hundred and sixty miles; its width varying from five miles at the mouth of the Apure to four hundred yards at the junction of the Cassiquiare. Truly a noble stream! Michelena states that the Orinoco is joined by no less than four hundred and sixty other rivers and more than two thousand rivulets. Of those flowing in on its left bank in the eastern part of its career we have no certain knowledge until we arrive at the Cassiquiare, a tributary of the Amazon. The Rio Negro, which it joins, though generally considered a Brazilian stream, for the first four hundred miles of its course flows through Venezuelan soil. Unlike the majority of Venezuelan rivers, whose waters are either of a clear milky-white or muddy-yellow colour, the water of the Rio Negro, as the name implies, is of a clear dark brown. Few fish are said to live



in this river, and the banks are clear of the pestiferous mosquitoes, sunflies, and sandflies that abound in such numbers in other parts of the country.

Another of these black-water streams is the Atibapo, which rises in the low hills opposite Maroa at the first southward turn of the Rio Negro, and flows north for two hundred miles, when it joins the Guaviare, and these two, flowing together for four miles, run into the Orinoco. I say advisedly 'flowing together,' for, strange to say, the waters of the rivers never mingle, that of the Atibapo on the east side looking like a stream of ink, while the Guaviare has the appearance of milk, the line between them being clearly and sharply defined.

The Guaviare is full of fish; crocodiles, or *cayman*, as the natives call them, abound on its banks, which are also infested by mosquitoes and sunflies. On the Atibapo side are no insects; the *cayman* never ventures into its waters, and, so far as I have been able to ascertain, only one species of fish—somewhat similar to a large trout, and called *bocacita* on account of the peculiar smallness of its mouth—is to be found in the river. The natives say the water '*peso mucho*'—that is, is very heavy—and that drinking much of it makes them ill. Personally I drank but little of it, and that little well qualified by stronger water imported from Scotland, the bottle from which this latter was extracted being afterwards filled with Atibapo water to be carried to civilisation for purposes of analysis. Through the courtesy of Professor W. Ramsay I have now received an analysis of the Atibapo water, which appears to be extremely pure—a fact sufficient to account for the absence of insects, &c.; no free ammonia and no chlorides, sulphates, or nitrates are discernible. The principal impurity appears to be of the nature of a peaty contamination, which doubtless gives the water its dark colour.

This Atibapo district is inhabited entirely by the Vaniwas, quite the most civilised Indian tribe in Venezuela. The Atibapo is navigable almost to its sources, and has on its banks many small townships chiefly inhabited by these Vaniwas.

Just above the junction of the Atibapo and Orinoco lies the town of San Fernando, the most important town in western Venezuela, and the seat of government in the Amazonas Territory. Commercially its situation is unique; and, considering the vast richness of the adjacent country, it should in time to come be a city of no small importance.

The Ynirida is another river freely navigable for many miles. Rising in the Sierra de los Maguas, it flows north-east, a broad clear stream with few *raudaes* and plenty of water; but except by the Vaniwas it is almost unknown. Between this river and the Guaviare legend places the home of the *Guahibos blancos* or White Indians

Humboldt describes as having been met at Esmeralda. I have made many inquiries, both amongst Venezuelans and Indians, but can find no evidence to prove the existence of such a race. The fact is, in all tribes some individuals are naturally of a lighter colour than others; besides which, the true skin-colour of the majority is disguised by the amount of earth and pigment they rub over themselves as a preservative against the heat of the sun and the bites of insects.

The Guaviare, another noble stream, comparatively unknown, rises in the Eastern Andes, and flows through Venezuela for the last three hundred miles of its course, navigable all the way.

From the Guaviare east to the Meta lies the country of the Guahibos, next to the Guaharibos the most numerous tribe in the Orinoco valley. As a rule the Guahibos, especially those living near the Orinoco, are friendly and peaceful, though those inhabiting what is now termed in diplomatic circles the 'hinterland,' and who have had little or no intercourse with even Venezuelan civilisation, own no great reputation, common report crediting them with a fondness for eating people. In stature they are small, averaging about five feet three inches, but of a remarkably powerful build, with enormous chests and shoulders, and without exception all are distinctly rotund. The principal chief, who has quite sunk his Indian name, and is generally known by his Spanish name of Henriquez, is a brusque, shy, shiftily-looking person, but wields great power over his tribesmen. Both he and the second chief, Celestino (or Trebu, his tribal name), a stout, cheery old fellow, have been given the rank of *capitan* in the Venezuelan army, to induce them to keep their followers quiet; and Henriquez always dons the full uniform of his rank, a quaint contrast to his retinue of semi-nude braves.

In theory, many of the Guahibos are Christians, though, from a ceremony that I unexpectedly dropped in upon one bright moonlight morning between two and three o'clock, I incline to the belief that they still cling to some form of sun-worship. The ceremony referred to was a moon-dance, which took place in a small circular forest clearing close to the mouth of the Vichada River, and was performed by some thirty braves, who sang a curiously sonorous and tuneful chant while they danced, a few women and children sitting round and beating time with dry sticks. First the dancers advanced in two lines towards the moon, which shone out brightly over the tree-tops, all pointing towards her with their left hands; then turning quickly, they formed two circles, one within the other, and danced round in opposite directions, the outside circle moving from left to right and the inside from right to left, each man holding his predecessor firmly just above the elbows. From time to time they unanimously quitted hold with the left hand and together

pointed to the moon. After a few revolutions the circles split into ranks again, the dancers unexpectedly sat down, and the singing suddenly ceased. The show was over. Owing to imperfect acquaintance with the language I was unable to fully comprehend the meaning of the dance; but of course the two Venezuelans who were with me declared it was the preliminary of a cannibal feast!

Taken all round, these Guahibos, though unreliable as to working capacity, are excellent fellows to get on with. A noticeable feature about them is that, unlike the neighbouring tribes, who boast glossy black hair, the universal colour of the Guahibos' hair is dark chestnut-brown.

Their territory is intersected by quite a number of streams, principal amongst them the Vichada, the headquarters of the tribe, and the Meseta. The Meseta is unexplored, but the Indians navigate it for many days in their canoes. The Meta, another fine river of Colombian birth, rises in the spurs of the Eastern Andes just below Santa Fé de Bogota, the Colombian capital, from whence there is a fair road over the mountains to Boyaca, a small town situated just beyond the Venezuelan frontier. It has long been under consideration to build a railway from this town to Bogota, and so make the Orinoco-Meta route the main channel for the entrance of goods into Bogota; but the completion of this work is improbable at least in the near future.

A hundred miles north of the Meta we arrive at the extraordinary combination of confluent streams that drain the flat Apure valley and join the Orinoco just below the great bend by three mouths known as the Apure, Apurito, and Caboul-liare. These three mouths, similarly to the delta mouths of the Orinoco, are connected by innumerable creeks and passages; while the main river, the Apure, is fed by no less than thirty-four rivers over seventy miles in length, besides countless creeks and rivulets; this part of the river-system alone furnishing at least two thousand miles of navigable water. From the Apure to the mouth of the Orinoco on the left bank there are no streams of importance, though there are many partly navigable by canoes.

Working westward again from the Boca Grande along the right bank, we have some small rivers all navigable by canoes, and then in longitude 63° the Caroni, a river of considerable proportion and importance, as it drains what is known as the Gold Valley of Venezuela. This river has its sources on the slopes of the well-known mountain of Roraima, and flows north-westward for two hundred miles, when it is joined by the Paragua, the combined streams under the name of Caroni joining the Orinoco a hundred miles farther north. The beds of these streams contain a fair quantity of gold, and many natives and broken-down miners earn a scant livelihood by washing their sands. A hundred miles westward is the mouth of the Aro, a smaller stream; and still another hundred, the Caura, a magni-

ficent stream, for a reliable knowledge of which we are indebted to M. Richard, an energetic French trader who has spent many years in its exploration and the exploitation of its resources. Rising in the Sierra Merevari, from the other side of which range the Orinoco, according to La Fuente, also springs, it runs north-north-west for three hundred and fifty miles, being joined in its course by fewer tributaries than any other large river in Venezuela. The country round the headwaters of this stream is inhabited by the Taparitos, a nomad tribe of whom little is known.

The Sierra Guamapi gives birth to two streams, the Cuchivero and the Suapure, the latter almost unknown, though the Venezuelan town of Urbana lies at its mouth. The Cuchivero, which I explored in 1897, has been fully described in an article in the *Royal Geographical Society's Magazine* (January 1899). Another river that I am sure will well repay exploration is the Ventuari, Venturario, or Atuari, as the Indians variously call it. Only one civilised man is known to have ascended this river, a Venezuelan called Martinez, who, having quarrelled with a neighbour in San Fernando de Atibapo, calmly walked over to his house one fine evening and scientifically planted a knife between his adversary's ribs. Then, as even a Venezuelan government feels it incumbent to take some slight notice of the crime of murder, he bethought himself of escape; so, appropriating the dead man's canoe, he ascended the Orinoco and turned up the Venturario, where his pursuers never thought of looking for him. Pushing on up the Venturario till he reached the Maniapare, he turned up that stream, and, leaving his canoe, took to the mountains. Aided by Indians, he crossed the Sierra Guamapi, and dropped down on the headwaters of the Cuchivero. Here he met a wandering tribe of Panares, whose chief at once addressed him in English! It appeared this chief had been brought up in Demerara, but had forsaken civilisation to assume leadership of the tribe. With this tribe Martinez stayed some time, finally making his way to Bolivar, where, so slow is justice, he arrived before the news of his crime, and was thus able to escape to Curaçao, the sanctuary of all Venezuelans whose country has no present need of them. When we consider the glowing accounts he gives of the immense richness of the country he passed through, it is surprising that no one has yet followed in his tracks.

This Venturario valley is inhabited by the Maquiritaires, by far the finest Indian tribe in Venezuela. The men are short, spare, wiry, and of an entirely different cast of countenance to their neighbours. Every two or three years some members of the tribe make a six months' pilgrimage to Demerara on purpose to buy English guns, as they will not look at the cheap German gaspipes usually offered for sale by the Orinoco traders. One chief offered me the equivalent of ten pounds for an old well-worn breech-

loader that would not bring half the money in England. From a dreamer's point of view the life of all these Indians should be an ideal one. Their surroundings are beautiful; no hard work is required of them; and one would think that life in a quiet hut by some swift-flowing stream would satisfy every desire of these uncultured children of nature. But the gregarious instinct of humanity, and possibly the necessity of mutual assistance in time of danger, drives them to herd together in communities; lust, envy, malice, hate, and all uncharitableness creep in amongst them, and the ideal disappears, leaving much that is sordid, evil, and unbeautiful in its place.

Outside the Orinoco system there are few rivers in Venezuela worthy of mention, the most prominent of these being within the country which was recently in dispute between England and Venezuela. It is to be hoped that the settlement of this long-pending frontier controversy may more largely attract British enterprise to the unexploited territory of this rich republic. As already remarked, many of the Venezuelan rivers are practically unknown; but information regarding them has in all cases been obtained by myself from the most reliable sources.

There are well over ten thousand miles of navigable waterways in Venezuela.

## THE WIT OF LAUCHLAN MACINTYRE.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.



HE spy threw himself down in the sand of the roadside and waited. In appearance he was a half-naked, dust-powdered ryot, overcome with heat and exhaustion after a day's work at the water-wheel; in reality

he was a tough and rising young policeman, keen and cautious, with a full knowledge of the responsibility of his task. But that was over now; he had done his work; and all that remained was for him to watch for the *sahibs* and their party, and to trust that some comrade would give him the tail of a horse to help him to the finish. The night had shut down upon the hot earth; in the glimmer of starlight the road could be seen dwindling to right and left, and the groves of mangoes that dotted the plain loomed large and vague. Clumps of coarse grass studded the sandy stretch; here and there a cultivator's patch was marked by its clumsy well machinery, and by the *machan* (bed platform) in the forks of a tree on which its owner would keep watch by night when crops were high. The cry of a quail and the yelp of pariahs at some distant village were all the sounds that broke the close, heat-laden silence.

Half-an-hour passed. The spy laid his ear to the ground, listened, sat up, and finally sprang to his feet as a blur upon the road began to take shape, and he could hear the clink of bridles and the pad of hoofs. He stood to attention, and Faulkner and Macintyre grew out of the dusk, and reined in. Behind them a many-headed mass paused too, in a scuffle of dust.

'Ah, here's our man,' said Macintyre softly. 'What *khabbar*, policeman?'

'Great news, Huzur. Hira Singh and his men are making merry in Kandua village, not a mile from here. Their sentries are but blind men, for I crawled through them to the walls

of the village, and I saw. The woman is there also.'

'You followed her?'

'I followed, Huzur, when she left the gates of the city, where she was joined by two of the robbers—they are bold men—and rode away very quickly into the country. I took a pony from the *thana*, and I rode too, following far behind and riding always under cover, where cover was to be had. I thought it would be a long way to go, Huzur; but, lo! it is not so. They are close at hand.'

'Doubled in his tracks. The impudence of the brute! And we were thinking he was in Trevor's district!' said Faulkner. 'Who would have thought of looking for him in the scene of his last robbery? Go on, policeman.'

'If the Heaven-born will come now, and those behind also, gently,' said the policeman, 'I will lead them. There could be no better time, for they are drunk, and over-bold.'

'Take my stirrup,' said Macintyre. He turned in his saddle and lifted his hand, and men and leaders jingled forward.

'What is the plan of campaign?' said Faulkner. 'There's no sounding-board here, thank Heaven!'

'My idea is to ride within a quarter of a mile of the village, then to dismount the men, and let them surround the place, the inspector leading them upon the farther side. I go ahead with you and get as near to the huts as possible. The sentries must be surprised in silence, if it can be done. Then, when I give the signal, or the alarm is started, we close in, and you and I and such men as are near us make for the headquarter staff. It's Hira Singh I want; the others can catch the rest of the gang if they like—each man to pick his spot before he attacks, and work straight for it.'

Faulkner nodded his approval, and the cavalcade

trotted on in silence. The signs of cultivation at the roadside grew more frequent, and presently, low upon the horizon, a spark of fire glimmered in a setting of huddled shadows.

Macintyre drew rein and dropped his voice. 'Kandua,' he said. He turned to the men and addressed them briefly, and at the close of the exhortation the troop dropped from their saddles, and hobbled each his own horse with halter-ropes. Then they spread out of the road into the fields, the stealthy figures creeping farther and farther apart until they faded into the dusk, and only two luckless constables remained to keep eyes upon the horses. The two in authority stalked cautiously from the track, and over the *arra* patches and the water-channels, their faces turned to the glitter of flame.

The village grew plain to see. They could hear now the hum of voices, the thud of a tomtom, and occasionally a drunken shout that beat through the night towards them. A red glow glinted between the walls of the huts, and the spy, who had been stealing in Macintyre's footsteps, crouched to his elbow and touched his sleeve. He pointed in one direction.

'There is the house in which I saw Hira Singh,' he said.

Macintyre looked, and saw the outline of a hut blocking the starlight some fifty yards away. It had a window, from which there spread a cone of light, and between the window and their goal an unsuspecting dacoit lolled upon his rifle, with his face toward the earth. The spy looked at him, and made a significant gesture with his hands. Macintyre nodded; and the next instant the man had dropped upon his belly, and was advancing like a snake through the waving crops.

Faulkner caught his breath, his attention riveted by the unconscious figure. The crawling policeman had been swallowed up in the growth, and the sentry continued to nod above his folded arms. A minute passed, and the watchers saw something rise behind him to the robber's level. There was the muffled clatter of the falling rifle, a groan that was stifled as soon as it was uttered, and the dacoit blundered to the ground with ten iron fingers gagging him.

Macintyre did not speak; he waved only to the line and ran forward with stooping shoulders and with hardly a glance at the two men on the ground. The policeman was still clutching, twisting, and heaving silently above his handiwork. Faulkner felt a shudder of repulsion, but it was no time for scruples; he pressed on too, and hoped, doubtfully, that the man might survive the rough handling.

They pulled up under the very walls of the village; and so complete was the surprise that not even an exclamation of alarm was heard, and not a sentinel escaped to shout or fire. The dacoits continued to riot and drink in noise and

fancied security. Macintyre and Faulkner crept to the window and looked in, so near that they could have almost touched the inner wall. The light came from a *chirag* (native lamp) which was smoking and stinking on the floor. Beyond it, reclining at his ease in the doorway, a large-bearded giant, clear-skinned, light-eyed, and swarthy, sprawled upon a string bedstead, a hookah at his lips; and beside him, the light flickering upon her beauty and her disguise, squatted Myra Pereira, arch-plotter and renegade, with his hand upon her shoulder.

'So thou hast outwitted them again! Well, it is easily done, for the pigs have little brains and no speed.' The dacoit yawned. 'To-morrow we go to harry the soul of Grigson Sahib, and loot that fat *tehsildar* of his.'

'I am tired of playing eavesdropper,' said the woman, with a shrug. 'When are we to go to Delhi and show how rich we are? Here one hoards, I wish to spend.'

'And I to rob,' chuckled Hira Singh. 'When, my pearl? Oh, when fighting loses its savour. When!—'

He stopped, and leapt off the bed with a clutch at his knife. The woman sprang to her feet and dashed a veil upon the lamp. She was too late. There was no time to scream, to fly, to put the knife to ribs. The doorway was choked with men, and Macintyre's arms were round the struggling robber.

A tumult of fighting rose from the village. The place had become an inferno of wounded men, of bitter enemies, of groans and blows and exploding rifles. The dacoits had been thoroughly surprised, but they knew how to fight at odds. Their first instinct was to rally round their leader; and therefore it was that Faulkner, hurrying in to complete the capture, found himself furiously assaulted instead, and fell to battering at his assailant's face in the frenzied struggle for life and liberty.

Macintyre and Hira Singh swayed and struggled and dashed each other from one side to the other of the hut into which they had tumbled. The dacoit's knife-hand was held to his side by the grip that had pinioned it at the first onslaught; but Macintyre was a light-weight, and Hira Singh tossed him to and fro as a terrier tosses a rat, spitting with rage and his inability to shake himself free. The woman watched with a primitive curiosity; she exhibited no feminine alarm, and she followed the progress of the fight from the darkest corner of the hut, unwilling or careless of the chance of escape.

Weight told. Bit by bit Macintyre lost his vantage-ground; inch by inch his enemy captured his position, and reversed it. He slipped at last, gasping and clutching as he was driven downwards, and in the next breath he was hurled and pinned to the ground, and Hira Singh, above him, was wrenching the knife free for the thrust of victory.



He twisted his wrist, once, twice, and tore it out of Macintyre's fingers. The knife swung, and then the woman sprang upon him and snatched it from his hand. It spun through the window of the hut; and Hira Singh's unwitting pause swept the tide of fortune again to Macintyre. He raised himself and caught the dacoit once more about the body, and they rolled across the floor. A minute later Faulkner and the inspector, panting from their own perils, dashed in, and found them thus; and Hira Singh succumbed to the superior numbers.

Macintyre and Faulkner sat down upon the string bed, while the remnants of the fight ebbed and died about the village, and the policemen began to straggle in with their prisoners. The inspector knotted and reknotted Hira Singh's bonds, and a couple of constables mounted guard over him and the woman.

The dacoit did not speak for a long time. When he did his voice was hoarse with rage and exertion, and the tiger-look he flashed at Myra Pereira made the onlookers think her well served by the turn affairs had taken.

'I have thee to thank for this,' he said. 'I shall not forget.'

'Perhaps not, seeing that thou hast but short time before thee for remembrance,' she said. She stared at him with indifference, and he scowled and dropped his eyes. Something in his attitude, and in the woman's cold-blooded fickleness, made a stir of pity in Faulkner's breast for the downfall of the man.

'Is he not your lover? Why did you do it?' he asked in English.

'Oh, he was a savage; I was tired of him,' she answered carelessly. 'He would have killed the tall young man, and I like him: he is very good to look upon. If it had been a little ape like you, now, he might have struck and welcome.'

'Oh,' said Faulkner dryly, 'I see. You evidently pride yourself upon your candour.—Macintyre, do you hear? To your other laurels you must add the triumph of your beautiful appearance. It counts for much, you see, in the untutored nether world. We have cause to be grateful for the lady's favour. Not that something is not due to your quick wits also: I have you to thank for the jubilation in which I shall indulge when I communicate the news to Trevor and Grigson. There will be much jealousy; I doubt that if you have captured one adversary you have raised up two more.'

He spoke in his usual whimsical way; but Macintyre looked into his face and saw something that warmed his heart. He, too, was sufficiently thankful for the caprice that had saved his life, and he leaned back against the doorway and surveyed his prisoner with satisfaction and relief. He measured Hira Singh with a foe's appreciation; though he twinged, momentarily, like Faulkner, at the sight of even a rascal suffering the bitterness of desertion and defeat. Myra Pereira had turned her back upon the lost cause, and was trying to coquette with the adamant inspector.

Macintyre folded his arms, and pictured the little mother in Scotland receiving the news of his success. The tingling exultation of the victor was stirring in his veins.

THE END.

## LYDDITE IN ACTION.

**I**N an article published in this *Journal* of 31st December 1898, shortly after the conclusion of Lord Kitchener's brilliant Soudan campaign ('Lyddite: the New Explosive'), the preparation and properties of lyddite were described, and it was therein predicted, on scientific grounds and the brief evidence furnished by its initial use against the forces of the Mahdi, that the new explosive would play an extremely important part in the great military operations of the future. The signal success which has attended the use of lyddite against the Boer forces in the present campaign has amply verified the prediction then made; and it is now certain that lyddite has established itself permanently as an agent of destruction. It is proposed in this article to give a brief account of the manner in which this explosive is now utilised on the field of battle, together with the additional details of its destructive power furnished in the progress of the present conflict.

At present the use of lyddite is restricted to shells for the heavier types of guns which form part of a siege-train, such as the 4·7-inch naval gun, and the 5-inch and 6-inch guns whose function is to shell the enemy at long range, and thus render it safe for the smaller field-guns to approach the position and be brought into action. An erroneous impression exists that lyddite shells are used in field-guns. Such is not the case, however; these weapons are still served with ordinary shells.

In the Arsenal at Woolwich a special department is now devoted to the manufacture of lyddite shells, hundreds of men and boys being constantly engaged in filling the shells with the explosive. Owing to the colouring property possessed by lyddite, the hands of the workmen engaged become stained a yellowish-brown; but, as only the superficial skin is affected, a few days' absence from the workshop suffices to restore the skin to its normal colour. After the steel casing which forms the shell has been filled, a

screw-plug is inserted in the aperture at the pointed end, to prevent any possible chance of water or dirt finding its way into the interior, and thus impairing the explosive power of the contents. The steel shells are then placed in a wooden case for convenience of storage, the 6-inch shells being packed singly and the smaller sizes in pairs, separated by a wooden partition. Distinctive marks are placed on the cases, so that their contents may be readily identified, after which they are ready for transport and taken to the magazine. So unaffected is lyddite by ordinary percussion that no special precautions are necessary in handling the cases, which are transferred without difficulty or danger to the field of action.

The fuses or detonators by means of which lyddite shells are exploded are made and stored separately. They are placed in hermetically-sealed tins containing four or five, and by this means are prevented from becoming damp or undergoing deterioration from other causes; the tins being labelled to correspond with the shells for which they are constructed, and are taken to the battlefield in a special wagon. The fuses consist of a metallic cylinder with a screw-thread on the exterior, by means of which they may be tightly fitted into the hole at the pointed end of the shell, which in transport is filled by the screw-plug. It would be impossible to handle shells in safety with the fuse in position, as any trifling accident might cause an explosion; indeed, the precaution is taken to store the fuses as far as is conveniently possible from the magazine, and thus prevent any possible mishap. Each fuse contains a charge of detonating material so arranged that when the point of the shell strikes or grazes an object the force of the impact causes the composition to explode. When it is desired to cause the shell to burst in mid-air, over the heads of the enemy, a special fuse is employed, in which a combustible mixture whose rate of burning is accurately known is made to bring the detonating material into action at any desired fraction of a second after the shell has left the gun.

Every gun-carriage possesses a receptacle, divided into partitions, in which the shells to be fired from the gun, together with the necessary number of fuses, may be stored, so that the ammunition may be served without loss of time. Behind the carriage two supplementary receptacles of the same kind are usually attached; and before going into action all these are filled. The supply is maintained from the base by means of small square carts, which, after being loaded at the magazine, are drawn to the guns requiring further ammunition, and their contents placed in the receptacles. In this manner a continuous supply of material is furnished to a gun in action.

When a lyddite shell is to be fired, the gunner removes the screw-plug from the pointed end of the shell, and inserts a fuse in its place. The

shell is now placed in the gun, together with the charge of cordite; and, the elevation for the object aimed at having been determined, the gun is fired and the projectile speeds on its deadly mission. On striking the ground the detonating charge explodes, and the shock thus generated in the interior of the shell causes the main charge of lyddite to explode and burst the shell into fragments, with results hitherto unknown in the history of warfare. There is no danger of the shell bursting prematurely from the concussion administered by the charge of cordite when the gun is fired. Lyddite can only be set in action by an extremely intense and sudden shock, whereas the effect of burning the cordite partakes more of the nature of a sustained pressure on the base of the shell. Further, as the pointed end of the shell containing the fuse is only subjected to atmospheric pressure, these powerful missiles may be discharged with perfect safety.

Some of the effects produced by the bursting of lyddite shells have been extraordinary, and half-a-century ago would have been deemed well-nigh impossible. Immense boulders of red sandstone, many tons in weight, which form the kopjes in which our enemies find concealment, have been in many cases reduced to fragments by the enormous bursting-force of these shells. Nor has the loss of life occasioned by their use been less remarkable, in spite of the fact that lyddite is primarily intended for use against earthworks and fortifications. The destruction occasioned by the hail of bullets from a shrapnel or man-killing shell must be very small when, as in the present instance, the enemy is carefully concealed behind huge boulders of rock; but these natural entrenchments afford no adequate protection against the effects of a lyddite shell, for the fragments of shell and pieces of shattered rock reach places inaccessible to bullets. Nor does the destructive action end here, for the sudden generation of gas which occurs when a mass of lyddite explodes produces a tremendous air-wave or concussion in the atmosphere, which in an area of upwards of fifty yards from the centre of explosion possesses far more force than the fiercest tornado; and any living creature within this zone of death, and directly exposed to the air-wave, would be stunned and possibly killed by the sheer force of the atmospheric shock thus produced. Striking evidence of this has been furnished on several occasions, many of the enemy having been found dead in their trenches with no signs of wounds, thus showing they had not been struck by fragments of shell or rock. Their lives must have been literally shaken out of them by the atmospheric disturbance occasioned by the bursting shell.

It has been stated in some quarters that poisonous gases are produced by the explosion of lyddite. Without going into technical details, it may be here stated that ample proof exists that

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the products of lyddite are no more injurious than those of gunpowder, and are much less objectionable than the gases evolved on the firing of gun-cotton, cordite, or nitro-glycerine. Any statements attributing death to poisonous gases from exploding lyddite may, therefore, be rejected as untrue.

Much has yet to be learned concerning the properties of this wonderful explosive, which in the future will undoubtedly have a much more extended use than at present. Our experience in South Africa has conclusively established its value

as a fighting material; and, in addition, its superlative destructive powers have rendered positions unsafe which in the absence of this powerful explosive would be practically impregnable, thus marking a new era in the progress of scientific warfare.

The time has not yet arrived 'when the war-drum throbs no longer;' but the extensive use of such terrible explosives as lyddite cannot fail to modify the counsels of the warlike nations in the future, and in this way contribute permanently to the interests of peace.

## 'ON THE ROAD.'

By CHARLES STIRRUP.



THE time of writing there are about two hundred and twenty theatrical companies—some forty-five of which are operative or 'musical'—touring the provinces, flitting from place to place week by week. This means that there are nearly five thousand strolling-players, exclusive of music-hall artistes, 'on the road,' most of whom, in spite of the inconveniences, hardships, and tribulations, love the life and prefer it to any other.

It would be a very difficult matter to find a happier man than an actor who is in employment, and who feels assured that his work will be paid for when 'treasury-day' arrives; for, unfortunately, there are many—considerably more than might be imagined—who live in a constant state of apprehension as to what Friday may bring with it. Past experience, perhaps, suggests an unsatisfactory reckoning, if indeed there be any reckoning at all. Maybe one town after another has been visited, and nowhere has the play been a success; the slender resources of the management have become exhausted; the salaries, paid in full at first, have been so frequently reduced that at last they are barely sufficient to keep body and soul together; there has been another disastrous week, and—What is to be expected? Possibly the manager will quietly leave the town, and then the company will be stranded, without money, without anything worth pawning, seemingly in an absolutely helpless and hopeless position. Every walk in life has its tragedies; these are the real tragedies of the theatrical profession. Compared with them, how paltry are those artificial sufferings which require the assistance of the limelight man to become in any way effective!

To be stranded in a provincial town is about as desperate a predicament as one could well be placed in; the consequences, unpleasant, to say the least of them, which accrue before relief is obtained can better be imagined than described.

Suffice it, however, that some relief, great or small, even if it be only temporary, actually is obtained, as it must be if starvation is to be avoided. This relief may come in one or more of several possible ways. The lessee of the theatre, if he be a kindly-disposed man, may be, and often is, of great assistance—for example, in organising a concert or entertainment, starting a private subscription list, or even paying the railway fares of the unfortunate company to London, where most of them will have friends. Another course open is to communicate with the Actors' Benevolent Fund, which has proved to be of enormous benefit to distressed members of the profession.

On none of such sources as these, however, does a 'stony-broke' actor rely with such a feeling of confidence as he does on the generosity of his more fortunate fellow-professionals. That seldom-failing *esprit de corps* which distinguishes the highest and the lowest is not only the most noble but also the most characteristic trait of the theatrical world. A case in point, typical of hundreds of others, came under the writer's notice a short time ago. During the performance at a big suburban theatre the members of a well-known light-opera company were shocked to see a former comrade, who had left the company just before Christmas to take a part in a travelling pantomime, in a state of complete collapse behind the scenes. After receiving nourishment—for he was famishing—the poor fellow told his story. His listeners had heard similar ones before. The pantomime had been a failure, and the 'smash-up' came at a certain town in the Midlands, no salaries whatsoever being paid. Without a penny in his pocket, Thompson—to give him a fictitious name—decided upon tramping to London, the journey taking him upwards of three days. During that time the only food that passed his lips was half a loaf of bread, which was given him at the door of a workhouse! He slept in any sheltered corner he could find; and at last, on the Friday,

soon after the shades of night had fallen across his weary path, 'the lights o' London' came into view. Half-an-hour later he entered the quiet thoroughfares of a northern suburb of the great city; but what had London to offer him? A night on the Embankment perhaps, and then—then—Stop! He saw a play-bill, and, reading it, found that his old company was performing in the immediate neighbourhood. There was still a chance, and a good one, for him. He hurried in the direction of the theatre as fast as his swollen feet would allow him, passed through the stage-door, and fell fainting into the arms of the first friend he came across. One of the results of this timely encounter was a subscription on his behalf, which yielded upwards of four pounds.

So far we have peeped only into the sad and sordid aspect of theatrical life, though in doing so we learn something of its most praiseworthy feature. Perhaps the great majority of actors and actresses of considerable experience have had, in their time, to face difficulties similar to those mentioned above; but, on the whole, the better-class travelling Thespians are fairly well and regularly paid for their services, and find in their experiences much that is pleasurable and interesting. Bohemians the world over are easily able to dispense with many home-comforts; and hence the inevitable inconveniences attending a constant change of lodgings are scarcely noticed. The cheerful philosophy which accepts with a good grace the fiat of the gods, be it fair or otherwise, enables theatrical people to put up with more or less frequent experience of a slatternly landlady, untidy rooms, and indifferent cooking. As for the long railway journeys which have often to be taken, they come as a matter of course; the tedium is scarcely noticed when the more light-hearted resort to practical jokes and cards, and the sober-minded—for, good reader, there *are* sober-minded mummies—to books and magazines. It is impossible, however, to view with absolute indifference the prospect of a search for lodgings on arrival, a stranger, in a town on a Sunday night. In the case of operatic companies which number forty or fifty members, it is sometimes found difficult to arrange in advance for the accommodation of all. The members of the chorus are the greatest sufferers in this respect, for it often takes three or four hours to find a suitable domicile; at times they do not escape even so easily. About the beginning of this year a company left Preston at ten o'clock on Sunday morning for Bournemouth, but did not arrive at that town until one o'clock on Monday morning, when the chorus were informed that, the place being full of visitors, every effort to obtain rooms for them had failed. So the remainder of the night was passed on the station platform, the waiting-rooms being closed; some of the young ladies falling asleep as they sat on their trunks,

others seeking repose on the not too comfortable seats.

No doubt the week at Bournemouth would compensate for this very unwelcome experience. A visit to such a pleasant, health-giving town during the winter months falls to the lot of but few of us. Theatrical men and women know how to make the most of such a treat. They are at home everywhere; do not coop up in their lodgings, but go out into the highways and by-ways; and in a short time are fairly familiar with a town and its neighbourhood. They know our country, its great cities and picturesque scenery, its historic spots and seaside resorts, much better than any other class; for commercial travellers are too busy to get beyond the business streets of a town. Beyond this, they make a great many very agreeable acquaintances; for pleasant-mannered, good-tempered people, who do not stand on any unnecessary ceremony or conventionality, can generally obtain quite as much social amenity as they desire. The old prejudice which once prevailed against those who earned their living on the stage—and which, by the way, extended also to the members of the literary, musical, and artistic professions—is rapidly dying, and justly so; the result being that travelling players of the better class frequently receive courteous little privileges, quite unsolicited, to view more than usually interesting places in their immediate neighbourhood. Indeed, it may truthfully be said that the members of a good light-opera company, for instance, pass, during the summer months, a pleasant, healthy life, in which social festivities of a very agreeable nature are by no means wanting.

Life 'on the road' has many disadvantages; but it certainly is not without its charms.

#### THE PRAYER OF THE WOMEN.

God of Eternity! shadows are stealing  
Over the Homes of the near and the far;  
E'en as we kneel at Thy footstool appealing,  
Haste Thou the end of the sorrows of war!

Wisdom hath whispered, 'The life of the nation  
Is thereby revived, and in unity held;'  
But is it enough? Oh, God of Creation,  
Speak! and the shadows of war are dispelled.

Far on the lone veldt our loved, in their dreaming,  
Are calling us vainly, as Heaven draweth nigh.  
Creator of Motherhood! grant us a meeting,  
That, calm as the cradled, they peacefully die.

Though for 'the good,' or the 'future ennobling,'  
Humanity, stricken, cries, 'God, let it cease!—'  
Hurl Thou the war-clouds, in pity, asunder,  
And staunch the heart-flowing with God-given Peace!

MABEL BEATRICE CARLISLE.